

GHOST IN THE SHELL
MAN-MACHINE INTERFACE

攻殻機動隊

ISSUE 6 OF 11

STORY AND ART BY
MASAMUNE SHIROW

TRANSLATION BY
FREDERIK L. SCHODT AND TOREN SMITH

この物語に登場する
様々な設定や解説や機
械は全て妄想の産物で
あり、現実とは無関係
の娯楽物です。服用を
誤る事無くお楽しみ頂
ければ幸いです。
またタッチ上げやギミ
ツクの「誤用」による
二次被害には当方責任
を負いかねます点を御
了承願います。

LETTERING BY
**TOM ORZECOWSKI
AND DAN JACKSON**

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2



OPEN

MAN-MACHINE INTERFACE CONTROL PREFERENCES



WARNING: READ ME FIRST!

Readers may note that certain panels seem to have been inadvertently left unreversed or have incongruous backwards lettering. These were artistic decisions made by Mr. Shirow during the production of the mirror-imaged foreign edition of *Man-Machine Interface*. — Dark Horse Comics and Studio Proteus

The various situations, explanations, and concepts that appear in this book are a product of my wild imagination, a form of entertainment with no connection to reality. Take according to directions, and enjoy. Be advised that the author assumes no responsibility for any collateral damage resulting from improper use of the various constructs, fabrications, and gimmicks in the story.

APOLOGIES AND CORRECTIONS

In the *Ghost in the Shell* graphic novel published in 1991, the heroine, Motoko Kusanagi, fused with a self-described "intelligent life-form" and left Section 9 of the Public Security Bureau. This story takes place approximately four years and five months later. As a result, this story is quite different from what was originally called *Ghost in the Shell* and featured Public Security's Section 9 (the Special Assault Force). I thought of visually differentiating the new Japanese title from the old one by merely changing the last kanji character, from one that means "military unit" to the homophonic kanji for "body" or "form" (which would shift the meaning of "mobile force" or "riot squad" to something like "mobile-unit-body-entity"), but for a variety of reasons I decided not to do so. To those readers expecting a direct continuation of the prior storyline, I apologize and beg for your understanding. I'm sorry, folks!

— Masamune Shirow

Send comments to:

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interface@darkhorse.com



ALL
RIGHT...
ENOUGH
GAMES FOR
NOW.



FHTTT

E-brain humans normally wake up sooner than cyborgs because their bodies make more independent demands on them (hunger, the desire to eliminate, sleep, or roll over at night due to poor circulation). Of course, these demands can be temporarily repressed using medication, but not indefinitely. Most people have experienced this, even if they don't have e-brains. Even when we're completely engrossed in video games, books, talking or creating something, sleep or hunger or poor circulation have the ability to interrupt what we're doing. At least for me. And you...



CHECKS REAR VIEW MIRROR



HMM...



AND NOW I'M
IN IT. I'M IN IT.
I'M IN IT.



LOOKS
LIKE I MADE
IT BACK TO
REALITY
IN ONE
PIECE...

WOW, YOU'RE BACK
EARLY. THE OTHER
THREE STILL OUT
THERE?

Motoko has apparently been processing the signals coming from her leg and deceiving her own senses to think that her right leg is really a cylinder. By doing so, in cyberspace her leg has the sensation (visual and tactile) that it is a cylinder, but in reality, as shown in the above panel, it's of course just functioning as a leg, and is perceived as such. This gives her a quick way to tell if she is in fact in "reality" and not simply another iteration of cyberspace. (Doesn't sound very believable, does it...?)







SURE IS TAKING
A LONG
TIME FOR A
PRELIMINARY
INVESTIGATION...




YEAH...
IT'S A
NEW
RECORD.



YOU DON'T
SUPPOSED THEY
WERE FRIED BY
AN ATTACK
BARRIER, DO
YOU?

IF I'VE BEEN TRACED
AND SURROUNDED,
MAKE SURE I'M
OUT OF THE WAY
BEFORE YOU
START SHOOTING,
OKAY?




HEY, I THOUGHT YOU
ASKED FOR THIS JOB TO
BE DONE 'CAUSE YOU
BELIEVED IN THE BOSS'S
ABILITY TO INVESTIGATE
AND INFILTRATE.



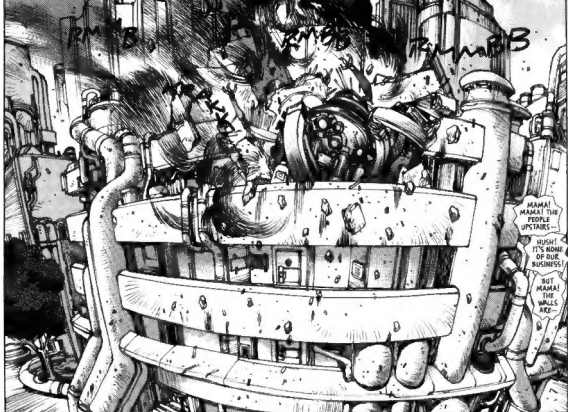
IF I HAD
100% FAITH,
I WOULDN'T
BE HERE IN A
BODY-TERMINAL
SURROGATE.

JUST A
DIRECT
CONNECTION.



YOUR BOSS IS USING
A DEFENSE ARRAY I
PUT TOGETHER, SO
WHEN THERE'S A
COUNTER-ATTACK
IT'LL BE EASIER TO
FIND OUT WHO THE
ENEMY IS. YOU KNEW
THAT, RIGHT...?





MAMMA!
MAMMA! THE
PEOPLE
UPSTAIRS...

HUSH!
IT'S NONE
OF OUR
BUSINESS!

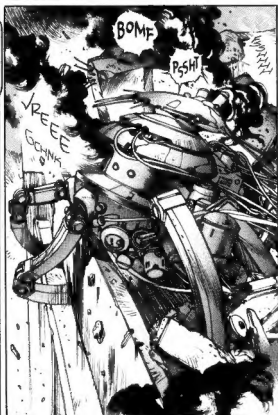
BUT
MAMMA!
THE
WALLS
ARE--

UH OH...



WHAT
TH--?!
BOSS?!

THEY'VE
BRAINJACKED
HIM. YOU
BETTER NOT
TRY TO
COMMUNICATE!



BOMB

PSSH!

VREE
GOINK

WONDER IF
THE SAMPLE I
HANDLED OVER
HAS BEEN
TAKEN CARE
OF...?

MAYBE
I'D BETTER
GET OUT
OF HERE...
THINGS
AREN'T
LOOKING
GOOD...







HMM... LOOKS LIKE I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET OUT OF THE GAME'S SELECTION STAGE.

WONDER IF I'M REALLY BACK IN A PHYSICAL REALITY...?

EITHER WAY, PROBABLY ISN'T MUCH DIFFERENCE IN THE BEHAVIOR ARRAY... BUT I STILL DON'T LIKE IT.

THEY'RE THE BOUNCERS FROM A LOCAL DANCE CLUB. I'M PUTTING TOGETHER AN INFECTION ROUTE FOR YOU...

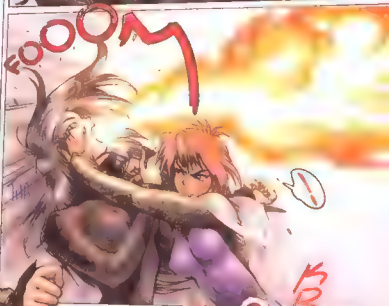
INJECT THE SAME VIRAL ARRAY AS LAST TIME! ANALYZE CHANGES IN THE ENEMY'S RESPONSE AND GIVE ME A REPORT!

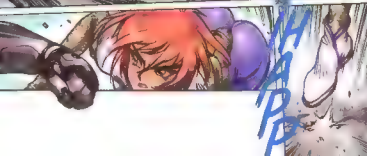
THE LOCAL POLICE SWAT SQUAD HAS BEEN MOBILIZED.

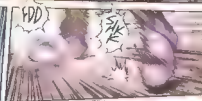
DO A TRACE ON THE ROUTE AND MONITOR IT. IT'S TOO SOON! OUR OPPONENTS SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE NUTS OVER SOMETHING LIKE THIS...





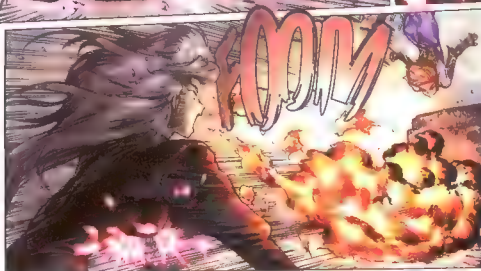
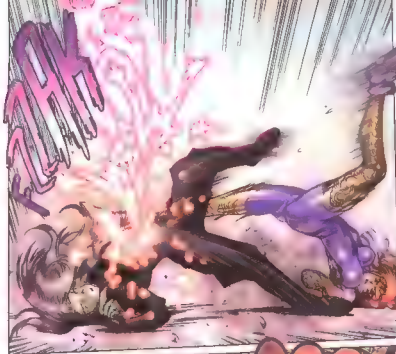






Chroma is a remote-controlled humanoid terminal, so she doesn't need to close her eyes when she takes a hit or exhale when she licks someone. She's just mimating the reactions of the person operating her, but the reactions have no particular meaning for her.



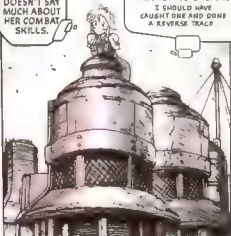




WOMP
GETTING
CAUGHT BY
THE SAME
TRICK TWICE
DOESN'T SAY
MUCH ABOUT
HER COMBAT
SKILLS.

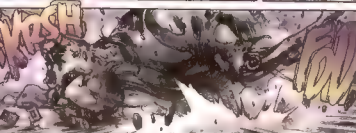
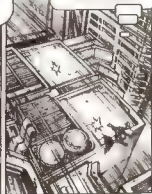
SHE'S JUST A HOST,
SO MAYBE THAT'S AS
GOOD AS SHE COULD
DO... TOO BAD, BUT
THAT'S THE BREAKS.

I SHOULD HAVE
CAUGHT ONE AND DONE
A REVERSE TRAC.



SHE WAS USING
THE SAME
COMMERCIAL
COMBAT SOFT-
WARE I AM, BUT
UNMODIFIED.
GOOD THING
I'VE GOT A
REINFORCED
FRAME...

SENDING FOUR
DIFFERENT TYPES
OF HOST BODIES
MEANS THEY'VE GOT
A PROBLEM WITH
THEIR INTELLIGENCE
GATHERING



LOOKS LIKE THE TWO
HEAVYWEIGHT BODIES
AREN'T GOING TO BE ABLE
TO COME AFTER ME. BUT...
WAIT A SEC... IF THEIR GOAL
WAS TO ELIMINATE ME,
THEN THEY SHOULD'VE
GRABBED SOME FIREARMS
FROM ALGREN'S MEN!

SO THE
GOAL MUST BE
TO TAIL ME...
BUT THEN WHY
ATTACK ME
THE WAY
THEY DID?
CAPTURE ?
VERY STRANGE...

GEE,
JUST
WHEN I
WAS
GETTING
USED TO
THIS
BODY...

TOO BAD,
BUT I
GUESS I'LL
HAVE TO
PUT IT TO
SLEEP.



Commercial combat software: A type of program that automatically takes care of combat, in accordance with the body's previously set structural strengths and powers.



SET THE MINE
RELEASE AND
MAG-KILL TO
TRIGGER EITHER
TWELVE HOURS
FROM NOW OR
WHEN AN
UNCODED
EXTERNAL
CONNECTION
TAKES PLACE



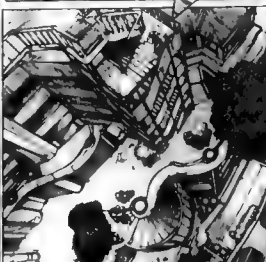
LOKI, HEAD FOR
OSAKA. SET A
TRAP IN THE
SAIKO HOTEL
AND STAND
BY

CAN I DO A
STRUCTURAL
ANALYSIS
ON HER?

Since it's just to gain time, anywhere would be fine. Motoko has a stock of cars available and rooms she periodically secures in hotels. This will allow her to activate Chroma around eight hours later as a decoy.

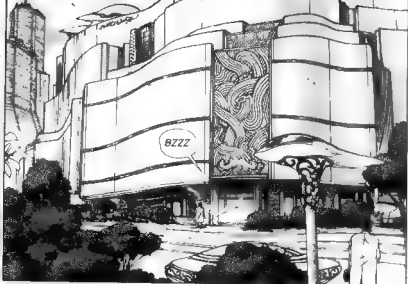
AFTER
HIBER
NATION
YES

HOO
RAY!

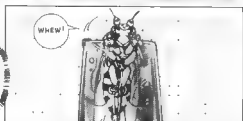


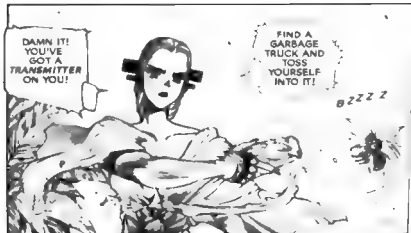
I WONDER IF RUNNING A
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS IS
REALLY THAT MUCH PUN...



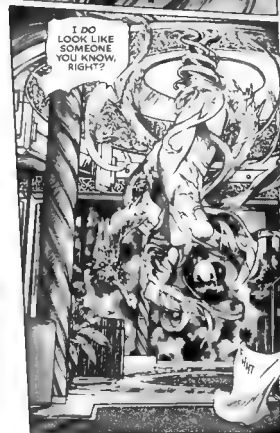


Passing through greenery is a good way to throw larger pursuers off track. The heavier the growth, the easier it is to lose them, but you have to move fast.





The "sealing process" used here is the same type used on the building in the opening scene of *Ghost the Shell 1*. Most windows are coated with thin-matrix displays and use random-vibration jamming, so infrared sensors and laser listening devices are generally useless for eavesdropping. The degree of randomness in jamming can be deduced from the movement of the displayed images on the inside of the glass (reflections of trees moving in the wind, and of water, are common). These windows can also function as antennae, so one has to be very careful.



I DO
LOOK LIKE
SOMEONE
YOU KNOW,
RIGHT?

?!
TAMAKI?

JUMP
IN THERE
WE GO

OH
NO

WELL...NOT
REALLY

SO
WHAT'S
GOING
ON?

WELL, INSTEAD OF
SENDING AN IMAGE
TO YOUR E-BRAIN
THE USUAL WAY YOU'LL
PROBABLY BE SEEING
ME IN THE FORM WITH
WHICH YOU WERE
MOST LINKED IN
YOUR FORMER
LIFE

SOMETIMES
I APPEAR AS
A BLOODY
FALLEN
WARRIOR,
AND PEOPLE
MISTAKE ME
FOR A
GHOST...

GEE, I
WONDER WHY
THAT MIGHT
BE? DON'T TRY
TO PROSELYTIZE
OKAY? I'VE
HAD ENOUGH
OF THAT FROM
YOU PEOPLE

SO WHAT
DOES THE
CHANNELING
AGENCY
HAVE TO SAY
TO A MERE
CIVILIAN?

Channeling Agency: A secret organ of the State
normally it helps suppress the scale of earthquakes
and other disasters with feng shui, etc., or it is
employed to psychically back up meetings with
foreign VIPs. Among those who know of its existence,
it's regarded as a very questionable agency.





AND FRANKLY, I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE CYBERDOME I THINK IT'S STUPID

KHAK

NO WAY! IT CAN BE REALLY FASCINATING!

YOU REALLY THINK IT'S FUN FOR ALL THE SPECTATORS TO DO AN E-BRAIN TRANSFER INTO THE HERO-PROGRAMS IN THE SOFTWARE STORYLINE AND ALL SHARE THE SAME EXPERIENCE?

TOO SOCIALIST FOR ME, THANKS

BUT THEY'RE ALL FUSING BY CONSENT AND... IF I TOLD YOU THE STABAT MATER STAFF HAD HIJACKED THE FOUR PEOPLE YOU MET EARLIER, WOULD YOU BE MORE INTERESTED?

NOT REALLY

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO CHAT WHAT WERE YOU DOING THERE ANYWAY?

b beep'

"SWITCHING TO HOUSE GUARD MODE 'BEEP'

WHO SAID WE WERE GOING TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION?

MEH

IF YOU REFUSE I WON'T HELP YOU! AND YOU'LL NEED MY HELP!

Heh heh heh!

IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE "DEAD LITTLE PIGS" STORY, THEN I DON'T MIND

NOW, THAT'S NOT THE SORT OF CASE THE CHANNELING AGENCY WOULD SEND ME FOR!



WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP



BUT, UM...
SO WHAT
WERE YOU
DOING
THERE?

HEAD FOR
THE MAIN
OFFICE'S
CENTRAL
SECTOR AT
STEALTH
LEVEL 2.

YES,
MA'AM

I WANT YOU
USE "BATOU" TO
CREATE AND
SECURE A ROUTE
TO THE COMBAT
SKILLS LAB AT
JAPAN'S PUBLIC
SECURITY
HEADQUARTERS,
THEN STAND BY

Let's assume that Motoko and Tamaki's conversation is actually all mental and therefore inaudible

HEY!! I
MIGHT LAY
A CURSE
ON YOU IF
YOU DON'T
TELL ME
STUFF!

SORRY
PROFESSIONAL
ETHICS
PREVENT
ME FROM
TALKING

IF YOU PLAN
TO COME
WITH ME,
DON'T FORGET
THERE'S A
PRETTY
ADVANCED
PSYCHIC WHERE
I'M GOING.
TOO

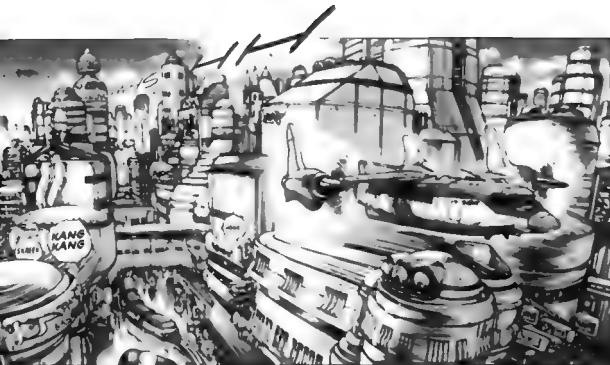
RRRGH! IF ONLY
I'D BEEN HOOKED UP
WITH A BUDDHA-
LIKE FIGURE WHO
DIDN'T NEED TO
BE TESTED!

I WOULDN'T HAVE ALL
TH'S HASSLE



The aircraft shown here is not actually a helicopter, but a tilt-rotor. In our story it's used for business and public service missions much more commonly than light aircraft or helicopters. At least that's the idea

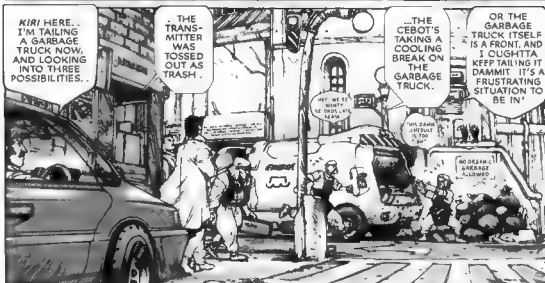




In reality the laser coming light wouldn't be visible unless there was a lot of smoke or dust in the room (The transmitter revolves along with the vision system.)



FRACTO TO KIRI...AN OSPREY JUST TOOK OFF FROM THE BUILDING VISITED BY THE BEE-TYPE CEBOT, AND IT'S NOW PASSING OVERHEAD. IT'S A WEIRD ONE THAT DOESN'T REGISTER ON SATELLITE, BUT THERE ARE NINE MACHINES THAT WOULD APPLY AT CONTROL.



A cebot is a "centimeter class" robot. It's usually anything from one to ten centimeters. As in the case of Motoko's Bumblebee, many cebots are built to look like insects. Cebots are used to eliminate insect pests or clean sewers and usually operate in swarms (aka "insectrons"). Cebots are a product of nanotechnology, but they're too big to be referred to as nanomachines or micromachines.

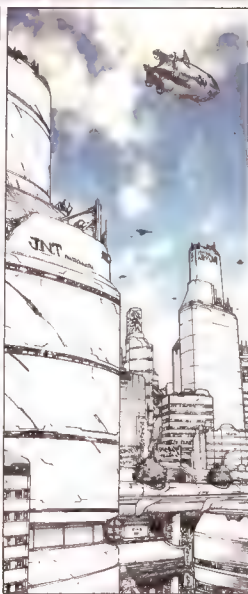
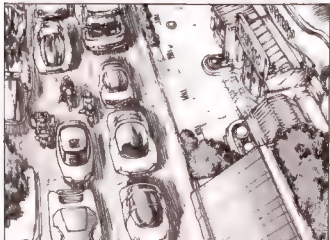
In the second panel on the preceding page, they wait nine minutes at the airport before heading to another destination because they want to throw off anyone trying to monitor, pursue, or tail them. Unless an individual aircraft can be directly detected via satellite or radar, it can be hard to distinguish from a distance, as many small aircraft use the airport. Obviously, they're not going to fly directly to the airport, either. They'll go in a round-about way to throw any pursuers off track.

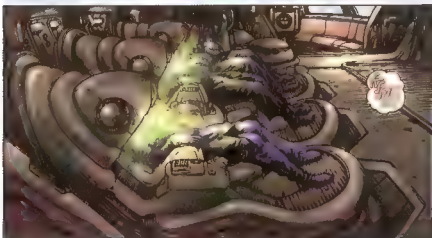
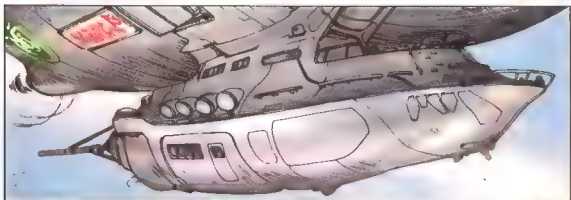
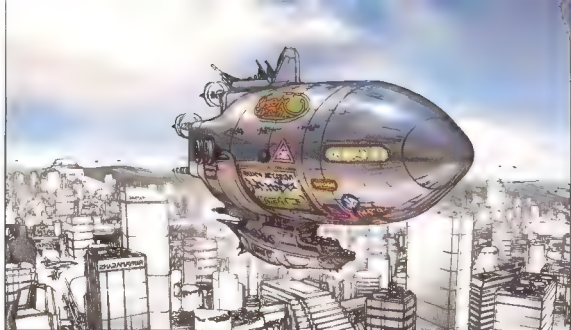
WELL, I JUST GOT A READOUT FROM THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT-- BOTH TRUCK AND WORKERS ARE APPARENTLY THE REAL THING.

USE THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT'S LINES TO TELL THE MEN TO FINISH COLLECTING GARBAGE AND TO HEAD FOR THE INCINERATOR PLANT, THEN LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO THE TRANSMITTER SIGNAL

OKAY. CHROMA GAVE THE "THING" TO THE DETECTIVE, ANYWAY, SO I'LL LEAVE THE REST OF THE TAILING UP TO YAMAZO.

I'LL DIS-ENGAGE HERE AND GO REPORT TO MOTHER...





TOO BAD
WE DON'T
HAVE MORE
PEOPLE

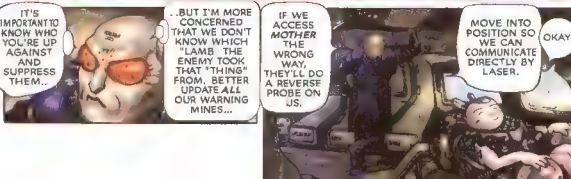
IT'S
IMPORTANT TO
KNOW WHO
YOU'RE UP
AGAINST
AND
SUPPRESS
THEM...

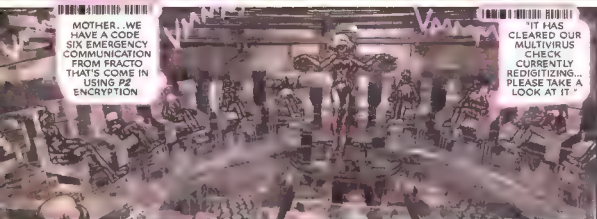
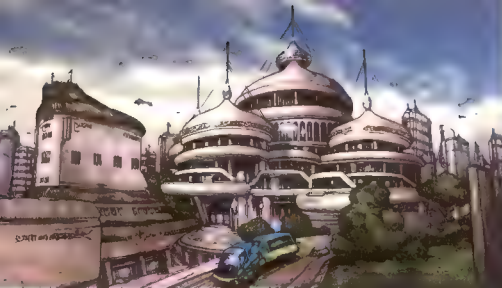
BUT I'M MORE
CONCERNED
THAT WE DON'T
KNOW WHICH
"LAMB" THE
ENEMY TOOK
THAT "THING"
FROM. BETTER
UPDATE ALL
OUR WARNING
MINES...

IF WE
ACCESS
MOTHER
THE
WRONG
WAY,
THEY'LL DO
A REVERSE
PROBE ON
US.

MOVE INTO
POSITION SO
WE CAN
COMMUNICATE
DIRECTLY BY
LASER.

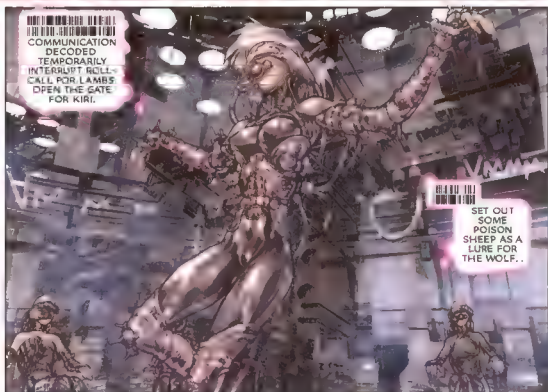
OKAY!





MOTHER... WE
HAVE A CODE
SIX EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATION
FROM FRACTO
THAT'S COME IN
USING P2
ENCRYPTION

"IT HAS
CLEARED OUR
MULTIVIRUS
CHECK
CURRENTLY
REDIGITIZING...
PLEASE TAKE A
LOOK AT IT"



COMMUNICATION
DECODED
TEMPORARILY
INTERRUPT ROLL
CALL FOR LAMBS
OPEN THE GATE
FOR KIRI.

SET OUT
SOME
POISON
SHEEP AS A
LURE FOR
THE WOLF..

INTERFACE

Send email comments to interface@darkhorse.com

Send snailmail comments to:

interface
c/o Dark Horse Comics
10556 SE Main St.
Milwaukie OR 97222

Well, we finally have enough room to get some of your comments into play. There's also been some lively discussion over on the darkhorse.com message boards, and I highly recommend any and all of you get your feet wet in those forums, if you haven't already. I've even found myself in there to clear some time to time. Hardly a feature, but it's not at all.

-Chris Warner

Dear Masamune Shirow,

Just got finished with a vacation in which I went to Hong Kong, Thailand, and Burma. The memories of this vacation were para-sailing, riding in various boats along the River Kwai, and Coral Island. Train ride through Bangkok has to offer. But nothing compares to *Ghost in the Shell*. This is manga done with excellence! I was in my own "shock and awe" when looking upon Masamune Shirow's incredible and very realistic artwork. The clone organ farm with the slaughtered pigs was absolutely horrific. Using pigs to harvest human organs is ghastly, but I remember what I once saw on the news, a rat that had a human ear growing out of its torso. It's disgusting, but this is where we are headed. What an imagination Mr. Shirow has in this futuristic sci-fi story. Imagine a city called Pegasus that is a floating city in the Indian Ocean. The airships and mechanical drawings are done with such precision...all I could do was applaud. Not to mention the elaborate costume designs and the originality of each costume. There is plenty of sci-fi intrigue that gets the reader curious, especially when it is described in analyzing brain activity, that there are drugs all over the place, and the link to E-brain activity can't be found. I love the footnotes that detail more insight into the story. Clones, cyborgs, and robotics...it's all here in *Man-Machine Interface*! Standing ovation to Masamune Shirow!

Paul Dale Roberts,

Knight of Jazma Jazma Universe Online!

"Shock and awe" is about the most accurate assessment I've seen to date to describe the typical first-time viewing of MMI. And second-time. And third-time. I still shake my head in wonder every time I crack the cover.

What can I say, awesome, unparalleled, über-terrific! The wait was worth it! *Dark Angel* and *The Matrix*...huh! Those jokers can't even begin to compare with Shirow's sophisticated and mindboggling storyline and high-tech erotic pencils (does he still use them?). Anyway, enough of the accolades...I have a question to ask, two for that matter. In *Intron Depot 2*, Mr. Shirow mentions the existence of *EXTRON Depot*. When is it coming? Will Dark Horse publish it? What about *Demon Hunter*? Was it ever published? Will Dark Horse publish it too? I hope you or the über-meister HIMSELF can respond to my questions. Thanks a lot and more POWER!

Steve Veloso

Well, Mr. Shirow is pretty busy, even by über-meister standards, so I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for a personal reply. That said, Extron Depot is still a work in process, and it will likely be some time before it sees print. Demon Hunter - a prose fiction series for which Mr. Shirow provided a handful of illustrations - has never been published in the States. Dark Horse would love to publish anything Shirow, of course, and we plan to publish more, but Extron Depot is a

long way off and Simon Smith is a series of novels, isn't exactly the kind of thing we typically publish. Anything's possible, but anything I say would be pure speculation, so I'll just shut the hell up.

After reading and enjoying the violence of the 2nd issue of Shirow's latest, *GITS2: MMI*, and reading the notes in the back, I'm finally ready to voice my thoughts on what has been eating at my brain about Shirow's work and the "need to Westernize."

Why is it that Dark Horse is probably at the moment the only unlicensed-manga publishing company remaining stubborn and absolutely demanding to print flipped-image manga? Isn't it enough Shirow slaved over this incredible work that is *Man-Machine Interface* that all it needed was to be translated and carefully presented in an unflipped English edition? Shirow obviously poured his heart and soul into the images presented in all his works, even more so in *Man-Machine Interface*. This is obviously a light year ahead of anything else I've seen from the artist. This might raise the bar of what is considered manga to a higher level at least for manga of this genre. But what really annoys me is that Dark Horse absolutely insists to ask Shirow to go back into what he already saw with his mind and created with his hands and further alter it, just so it could be published with what is not at all the "manga" style of an English edition.

Why is this even necessary? The manga-reading market has come far in the past ten or so years, and more companies are bringing to light wonderfully done unflipped editions. Lots of fans have been asking for this, and companies are delivering, and often with prices reflecting the increasing acceptance of manga as a viable medium where all that's necessary is to translate the material without flipping or other major mutilations.

And another issue I have is with Dark Horse's censorship of some pages in an issue of the original *GITS* manga by Shirow. Fans found out pretty quickly that a cyber lesbian sex scene was completely chopped out, one panel having been re-drawn by Shirow (presumably), just so there'd be something instead of half of a blank page. I was sent color copies of those pages soon after that issue came out, and a friend sent me a text file from an English translation done somewhere in Europe (not sure which country it was published, unedited and unflipped, but such an edition was published). Granted, there was probably a need by Dark Horse at the time *GITS* came out to make that eight-issue manga series appeal to a mass market without raising the ire of some people, that being a small-minded and ignorant minority who don't buy manga nor can appreciate the reason why anyone would buy it. But since it happened once in the original *GITS* by Shirow, I am very concerned this same censorship, removal of material, and changes to images will happen with *GITS2* because of the same issues for requesting the changes and censorship.

Manga doesn't need to be "Westernized" any more than being translated. And I am sure I'm not the only one offended that the only way to see *GITS2: MMI* unedited, unflipped, and uncensored is to buy an original Japanese edition. Just for once I wish Dark Horse would take the leap and join the rest of the manga publishing community and do an unflipped edition. *GITS2: MMI* could have been such a centerpiece for such an entry. Working with the images unflipped would have saved lots of man hours, both for Shirow-sensei and the people who have to put the translations on the pages in the proper places. I appreciate the fact that Shirow had a heavy hand in how *MMI* was prepared for an English edition so it's pretty much how he wanted it to look because of the fact that Dark Horse wouldn't publish it unflipped (and uncensored), but sadly I feel this was work he never needed to do in the first place. This is not to say I won't order and collect the rest of the series. But I would look forward to an unflipped edition in English, perhaps as a \$15 graphic novel... Just so you know.

Andrew Floyd

First of all, you're laboring under two massive misconceptions. Dark Horse neither censored Mr. Shirow nor forced him to Westernize *Man-Machine Interface*. Had Mr. Shirow asked that the "hot" pages be left in and that the book be printed in its original orientation, we would have done so. In fact, we'll be publishing *Berserk* later this year non-Westernized at the creator's request. Mr. Shirow himself decided to pull the controversial pages - they aren't included in the Japanese collection either - possibly because the book would have had to be sold as an Adults Only title in the States and likely wouldn't have been allowed into a number of countries. Shirow wants to get his work to his readers, and omitting a small number of pages hardly seems like a huge sacrifice to achieve that end, particularly when balanced by the inclusion of over 150 pages of new material.

All that said, let's get down to one of my "favorite" subjects: to Westernize or not to Westernize. First off, I'll lay this down right away: there's nothing "authentic" about right-to-left oriented manga translated for a Western audience, any more than little white words printed across a screen (subtitles) are "authentic." The only authentic way to read manga is to read it in Japanese with a much stronger cultural background than even fluent Westerners will ever experience. Publishing is about getting stories into the hands of readers. Just as some viewers of foreign films prefer dubbed films over subtitled, some readers prefer Westernized manga because it does not interfere with the natural reading and visual flow of comics, as opposed to the counter-intuitive chore of having a book visually oriented right-to-left, while still having to read left-to-right. To be frank, if you want a more authentic experience, the English words should be stacked vertically and aligned in rows that read right to left, but my guess is that would be too ridiculous and annoying for even the most hardcore purists. And what's authentic about not translating sound effects? Sound effects are often vital storytelling information, not just fancy graphical flourishes. Does the intentional omission of crucial story content somehow enhance the reading experience? In a word, no.

Like it or not, the refusal to Westernize manga acts as a barrier to many casual readers – i.e., those who just like cool comics regardless of national origin – and those are the readers this industry needs to expand its base and create a future where graphic fiction becomes an accepted and vital art form in America. So, while you might prefer the non-Westernized manga – no crime, certainly – apparently its Westernizing doesn't sufficiently degrade your reading experience enough to completely turn you off. Let me also remind readers that until some publishers began to market non-Westernized manga as some sort of superior, desirable form, westernizing manga was not an issue. In other words, no one cared until someone started promoting the idea that something was wrong. Ultimately, only the original Japanese editions are authentic, and the merits of Westernized or non-Westernized manga boil down to the purely subjective realm of personal taste. Your mileage may differ. End of rant.

Dear Mr. Warner, Mr. Smith, and/or Mr. Dyer:

I just spotted the first issue of *Ghost in the Shell: Man-Machine Interface* and picked it up, having heard interesting things about it. I must say I wasn't disappointed; I plan to pick up the next issue when I go back next. I particularly like the sophisticated treatment of future technology and the clever nuances that convey it in the story.

However, I wanted to note one small technical inaccuracy. Issue 1 refers to "fifteen knots per hour" at the top of the eighth interior page and at the top of the 28th interior page. A check of Webster's Collegiate confirms that the primary meaning of "knot" is "nautical mile per hour," which is already a measure of speed; so saying "knots per hour" is the same as saying "nautical miles per hour per hour," which is unnecessarily repetitious and confusing. I note that several other places give speed in just "knots," among them Motoko's dialogue in the bottom middle panel of the 10th page and the displayed vessel statistics in the middle panel of the 29th page.

This isn't a big deal and certainly doesn't prevent me from enjoying the story. But noticing it is a slight distraction. So I'm writing to tell you about it in the hope of exorcising it. Perhaps you and/or the translators can watch for that one in issues not yet at the printer.

Best wishes, and thanks for your attention,

William H. Stoddard

Hey, you win the "catch of the day"! How'd we let that slip through? I'm not saying that I actually sleep on the job, mind you, but there's nothing wrong with working in pajamas while laying down, in my opinion. When my eyes are closed, I'm concentrating really hard! Otherwise, the heavy drinking has never really affected my work, and many actually consider extensive on-the-job Playstation use as an aid to staying alert, focused, and tuned in to current trends. At least, it works for me.



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